

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9332
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT PINS EG
SUBJECT: BANNED ISSUE OF AL AHALI

REF: CAIRO 13105

SUMMARY: EMBASSY OBTAINED MUCH SOUGHT AFTER COPY OF
BANNED ISSUE OF LEFTIST AL AHALI. ISSUE CONCENTRATES
ON SUNDAY'S REFERENDUM, URGING VOTERS TO "VOTE
NO" TO "MEASURES TO LIQUIDATE DEMOCRACY." RESTRICTIONS
TO BE PROMULGATED BY REFERENDUM CONSIDERED UNCONSTITUTIONAL.
LEFTIST PARTY LEADER KHALID MOHIE EL DIN GAVE PRESS CONFERENCE
TODAY SAYING PARTY WILL CONFRONT GOE IN COURTS AND MAY SEEK LINKS
WITH WAFD. ISSUE LESS STRIDENT THAN EXPECTED AND CONTAINS NO
NEW REVELATIONS ON CORRUPTION OR OTHER ISSUES. AL AHALI
HOPES TO PUBLISH NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY.

1. SEIZED MAY 17 EDITION OF AL AHALI, OF WHICH EMBASSY
OBTAINED COPY, LARGELY DEVOTED TO REFERENDUM. HEADLINES
PROCLAIM: "MEASURES TO LIQUIDATE DEMOCRACY"; "NO TO REFERENDUM";
AND "WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF JUDGEMENT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LAW." PAPER REPORTS LEFT PARTY'S SECRETARIAT WILL REMAIN IN
CONTINUOUS SESSION AND "EMERGENCY" COMMITTEES FORMED TO HOLD
RALLIES IN GOVERNORATES.

2. AL AHALI PROMINENTLY PRINTED PARTY STATEMENT IN WHICH
LEFTISTS CLAIM REFERENDUM WILL LEAD TO LIQUIDATION OF
POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND THAT RESTRIC-

TIONS WILL ALSO APPLY TO LABOR AND POPULAR MOVEMENTS. IT ATTACKS THOSE CASTING DOUBTS ON OTHER'S RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AS CONFLICTING WITH ISLAMIC LAW. ACCORDING LEFT, BAN ON PRE-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL FIGURES CONFLICTS WITH EARLIER SADAT STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD NOT AGAIN ISOLATE THESE INDIVIDUALS. REFERENDUM'S CLAUSES CONCERNING THOSE CONVICTED FOLLOWING JANUARY RIOTS ADDS NEW PENALTY WITHOUT JUDICIAL REVIEW AND,THUS, UNCONSTITUTIONAL. ALSO UNCONSTITUTIONAL ARE PROVISIONS TRANSFERRING PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S FUNCTION TO SOCIALIST PROSECUTOR AND JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS TO PEOPLES ASSEMBLY. PARTY NOTES NO LAW HAS BEEN PROMULGATED DEFINING POWERS "SOCIALIST PROSECUTOR."

3. FURTHER, LEFTISTS CLAIM RESTRICTIONS WOULD "DEFAME EGYPT" INTERNATIONALLY, SINCE THEY CONFLICT WITH CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS. LEFT CONCLUDES WITH APPEAL TO POLITICAL PARTIES, TRADE UNIONS, MASS MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL FIGURES TO DEFEND DEMOCRACY AND THE RIGHTS OF EGYPTIAN CITIZENS.

4. EDITORIAL. FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL BY PARTY LEADER KHALID MOHIE EL DIN ATTACKS RESTRICTIONS ON DEMOCRACY AND CALLED ON ALL TO SHOULDER HISTORICAL RESPONSIBILITY. MOHIE EL DIN ALLEGED WHAT REALLY PROVOKING MASSES IS SHOCK OF PRICES, INCOMES AND DAILY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CRISES.

5. PRESS CONFERENCE. KHALID MOHIE EL DIN HELD PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 18 AT WHICH HE PASSED OUT MIMEOGRAPHED COPIES OF PARTY DECLARATION DESCRIBED ABOVE. JOURNALISTS DESCRIBED MOHIE EL DIN AS CALM, RESTRAINED, BUT DETERMINED. HE TOLD THEM PARTY WILL SEEK CONFRONT GOVERNMENT IN COURTS. MOHIE EL DIN ALSO HINTED AT FORGING LINK WITH WAFD. SPEAKING PRIVATELY TO JOURNALISTS FOLLOWING CONFERENCE, MOHIE EL DIN SAID HE DOES NOT THINK GOVERNMENT WILL SEEK TO BAN PARTY, NOR DOES HE EXPECT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST HIM. HOWEVER, HE ANTICIPATED THAT GOVERNMENT WILL MOVE STRONGLY AGAINST PARTY'S SECOND ECHELON IN EFFORT TO WEAKEN MOVEMENT.

6. COMMENT: BANNED ISSUE, ON INITIAL READING, IS LESS STRIDENT THAN WE HAD EXPECTED. IT FALLS SHORT OF URGING READERS TO OBSTRUCT REFERENDUM AND CONTAINS NO NEW REVELATIONS ON CORRUPTION. CRITICISM OF REFERENDUM IS RELATIVELY RESTRAINED, PERHAPS BECAUSE PARTY HAD HOPED TO GET THIS EDITION OUT. WE UNDERSTAND AL AHALI

WILL ATTEMPT REGAIN ACCESS TO PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION NEXT
WEEK. MATTHEWS

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